



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2026 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, commencing at 7.00 pm

Councillors present: Cllr Bustard, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Hill, Cllr Larkin, Cllr Seeley. District Cllr Greaves & County Cllr Shing.

In attendance: Clerk & RFO Phil Burgess.

Public Session: Five members of the public were present.

Traffic concerns in the light of the proposed changes to the Exceat Bridge:

A resident had concerns regarding the potential increase in traffic volumes and additional speeding that a replaced bridge could create. Speed limits are often ignored. A plan for safety and speed control was requested.

A second resident is a regular pedestrian and bus user in the village. She had noticed increased traffic volumes in recent years on the A259 and traffic speeding down hill in both directions to "take a run up" to the forthcoming uphill slope. Visitor numbers and traffic flow will increase, creating gridlock around the Gilbert's Drive junction.

Action: The issue would be brought to the February Agenda.

2237 Apologies for absence. Cllrs Baker and Morris.

2238 Declarations of Interest. Cllrs Greenway and Seeley item 2254 Bowls Club

2239 Member of Parliament report. Written report noted. *Action: Clerk to register interest for a "summer tour" visit from our MP.*

2240 County Councillor Report.

Upper St Gulley Cllr Shing has been campaigning for 10 years to have this addressed. The recent rejection by ESCC relates to a shortage of funding in the financial year rather than in the long term. Cllr Seeley asked why the Parish had never been approached to pay for remedies if the issue was funding. Cllr Hill pointed out that there had been an ESCC van present at the junction but couldn't see the gulley for debris and leaf cover! Cllr Bustard said the Parish Council would push back against repairs rejected on cost grounds.

Jevington Rd The white lining has been completed satisfactorily but there are instances of standing water. The council has received no invitation to the advertised stakeholders meeting due to take place on 19th January. Cllr Shing will pursue.

2241 District Councillor report. Cllr Greaves' written report would be circulated after the meeting. The main points were as follows:

- Unitary authority proposals. The 3 unitary authority model (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton) is likely to be chosen over the 5 unitary authority model proposed by Brighton.
- Grant funding is available to SMEs in the East Sussex Digital Growth Initiative.
- Grants are available to promote physical activity and Health and Wellbeing.
- WDC will freeze their portion of the council tax in 26/27.
- March will see the introduction of food waste collection.

- The £10,000 ward budget scheme funding has now been exhausted with the Cricket Club and Bowls Club accounting for around 80% of expenditure (both on mowers). Cllr Greaves has requested that any unspent amounts in the budgets of other district councillors be transferred to those where the budget is exhausted.

Agenda items 14 and 15 were brought forward.

2242 MUGA Project. The chair of the Cricket Club, Jason Woodford attended the meeting to answer questions on this and the following item (Orchard grant application). The grant application for the MUGA was almost complete. The Cricket Club had selected a contractor and a reserve, and an invitation would be sent by the CC to the council to attend a further interview with the successful candidate. Cllrs Harvey and Hill will attend in the absence of the chair of pavilion committee (Cllr Morris). Cllr Bustard requested that the Neighbourhood Plan aspects regarding youth feedback should be incorporated into the application and that the Cricket Club should consult with the council over the naming process for the facility.

The council resolved to earmark £10,392.19 towards the project. These funds represent CIL receipts. *Action: Clerk to send letter of support and pledge for £10,392.19 to Cricket Club.*

2243 Community Orchard on the Recreation Ground. A short presentation was given by Lesley Durso (EDFRA), and she and Jason Woodford answered questions on the proposed project and WDC grant application which has a deadline of the end of January. The proposal is to use espalier trees to screen the intended storage to the south of the MUGA together with other fruit trees in the same area to create a family space and picnic area. The (half-standard) trees would initially be protected by stakes and guards. Species had been chosen so they will not grow too large, and decisions were taken after consulting both a botanist and tree surgeon. A second stage planting would be considered if the first was successful.

Some councillors were concerned whether this was a “good fit” for the recreation ground and whether this should go ahead when so many changes were in progress. Cllr Seeley asked whether the Greensward had been considered. The grant application is site specific since the owner’s permission needs to be obtained but the location within that site can be changed.

Council decided that the application would be supported on the understanding that the location would not be decided until the masterplan for the recreation ground had been agreed. If it conflicts entirely with that plan the application could be withdrawn.

2244 Minutes of the meeting on 4th December 2025. These were approved by council and signed by the chair.

2245 Matters arising. See following item.

2246 Update on Actions outstanding.

Minute 2052 Broadband. City Fibre investigation is still on-going. Awaiting response from BT regarding support for vulnerable following digital switchover.

Minute 2179 Downs View Lane Fly tipping. Letter has been issued. Only 1 request for another cut in addition to council decision of 1 per year. Consider closed.

Minute 2180 Greensward Litter Bin. Clerk to meet contractor and Jonathan Timberlake on site on Tuesday to determine position of new bin. Old bin will be removed.

Minute 2198 CIL Update addressed this agenda (See Report Item 14 and 2242 above)

Minute 2200 Café East Dean – Written to Raj as requested. Agreement received from landowner for the No Entry sign for Gore Farm Close which has been ordered. Clerk will finalise the format for the bus shelter sign with SignTek in Korean, Chinese and English.

Note: Further sign with QR code for local footpaths will be brought to next agenda.

2226 CIL Funding. Potential grant application from SDNP still outstanding.

2227 Bank Mandate. New mandate brought to meeting (for Cllrs Bustard and Fowler to complete).

2234 (d) Highways and Footpaths

- I. Friston Church Footpath. Some investigation into tree root damage seems to have been undertaken but the “repair” has created a bigger trip hazard. Still no action apparent on the partial collapse of the footpath. – *Action: Both items to be taken to SLR meeting in March.*
- II. Water run-off drainage overflow issue around 2a Windmill Lane. - Reported to EDDR (still happening).

All other issues cleared.

2247 **Payments and receipts.** All approved as detailed.

2248 **Bank Reconciliations.** Accounts agreed and signed by the chair.

2249 **Gilbert’s Drive proposed footpath.** Expenditure to be included in 2026/27 budget. Investigation and quotations will be progressed in new financial year.

2250 **Parish Precept.** A precept for 2026-27 was agreed at £79,103 which represents an increase of less than 2.5% on the current year figure. *Action: Clerk to notify WDC.*

2251 **Child and Vulnerable adult Policy.** The policy was agreed with the addition of Cllr Greenway as a designated person since he has safeguarding training. *Action: Clerk to amend.*

2252 **War memorial railings (attachment of bicycles).** Cllr Harvey had noticed no damage to the railings. Bicycles left on the ground around the memorial (rather than standing up against it) are a safety risk to children. Policing of the policy would be an issue. The situation would be monitored and the resident advised. *Action: Cllr Greenway.*

2253 Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.

1. A local point of contact in the village was not required. Copies of the plan would be issued for return or purchase at the open days.
2. Attendance at the open days would be as follows:
 - Tues 27th January (evening 6.30-9) Cllrs Bustard and Fowler
 - Fri 6th February (Afternoon 2-4.30) Cllrs Hill and Seeley
3. Polling Day Thursday 12th February (attendance hours 7am-10pm)
 - 7-10 am Cllr Bustard
 - 10am-2pm Cllr Larkin
 - 2-5pm Cllr Hill
 - 5pm – close Cllr Seeley & Cllr Fowler
4. Expenditure for posters but *not* banners was approved.
5. The proposed transport via Cuckmere buses was *not* approved.
6. The NP synopsis would be checked by Cllr Seeley.
7. Printed copies would be made available at the open sessions.

Action: Cllr Seeley to action points 4 and 6. Clerk to progress remaining arrangements.

2254 **Bowls Club Grant application.** Cllr Seeley advised that the total cost of the mower required was £5500. Cllr Greaves's members' grant had met £3000 of this expense. Council agreed to grant £500 towards the purchase which would reduce the club's regular outgoings significantly. *Action: Clerk to advise Bowls Club.*

2255 **Social Media Publicity.** Deferred for further information.

2256 **Business Cards.** Little demand amongst councillors at present. Clerk would create potential layout. *Action: Clerk*

2257 Urgent Items.

- Clerk to investigate Hybrid meetings (part physical, part virtual) in view of the access difficulties in poor weather and holidays. *Action: Clerk to report back.*
- With a view to a refresher on the emergency plan, the latest EP document would be forwarded to Cllrs Bustard and Fowler.

2258 Reports.

- Chair of the council.** No report.
- Defibrillators.** All checked and correct. Cllr Hill will make a further approach the gentleman on Friston Hill for a potential power supply.
- Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.** (covered under item 2253)
- Rights of Way and Highways.**
 - Overhanging hedge on Eastbourne Rd between the bus stop and Downs view Lane now resolved after Cllr Greenway visited resident.
 - Cllr Hill would approach our contractor to resolve the long-standing gulley issue on Upper Street.
- Tree Warden.** None
- Recreation Ground.** None
- Downlands Estate Management Group.** No report
- Traffic Group.** No report.

2259 **Correspondence.** None.

2260 **Date of next meeting.** This will take place on Thursday 5th February 2026 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.15 p.m.

Minutes confirmed as a true representation: Signed.....Date.....